

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EA-10 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 HA-05
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /128 W

-----127824 261818Z /53

R 261712Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6566
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
USMISSION GENEVA

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NOFORN

USEEC

E.O. 11652: XGDS-L
TAGS: ELAB SHUM UK
SUBJECT: ICFTU COMPLAINT AGAINST USSR

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 10106, (B) LONDON 7581, (C) LONDON
7617

SUMMARY: THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL HAS FORMALLY ACCEPTED THE ICFTU BOARD DECISION TO FILE COMPLAINTS AGAINST GOVERNMENTS OF USSR AND POLAND UNDER FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION CONVENTION 87. HOWEVER, THE TUC IS CONTINUING TO MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE AND GIVES NO INDICATION OF "GOING PUBLIC". THE LABOR PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) ALSO DELAYING ACTION ON TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE. HOWEVER, PRIMARY SOURCES INDICATE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DISQUIET WITHIN THE TOP LEVELS OF BOTH BODIES CONCERNING THE OFF-HAND TREATMENT THE SOVIETS ARE GIVING BRITISH LABOR LEADERS ON THE TRADE UNION RIGHTS ISSUE DESPITE THE LENGTHS TO WHICH BRITISH LABOR HAS GONE IN ITS "BRIDGE-BUILDING" EFFORTS. MEANWHILE, PRESS CRITICISM OF THE SILENCE OF THE TUC AND THE LABOR PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MOUNTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO PRIMARY SOURCES, TUC GENERAL COUNCIL MAY 24 ENDORSED THE ICFTU DECISION TO FILE COMPLAINTS AGAINST USSR AND POLAND UNDER CONVENTION 87. THE TUC CONTINUES, HOWEVER, TO TAKE A WARY LINE WITH SOME KEY OFFICIALS EVEN GOING SO FAR AS ATTEMPTING TO DISCOURAGE
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JUNIOR MINISTERS (WHO HAVE TOLD US) FROM ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON SUBJECT OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE. HOWEVER, MINISTERS AND CERTAIN GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS INFORM US THE TUC IS EMBARRASSED AT "DISCOURTEOUS", STONY SILENCE BY RUSSIAN OPPOSITE NUMBERS TO APPEALS FROM BRITISH TRADE UNIONS "TO GET THE FACTS" CONCERNING REPORTS OF ABUSES OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS PUBLICIZED IN PRESS. GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS SEEM ESPECIALLY UPSET BECAUSE OF THE EXTENSIVE PURSUIT BY TUC, OF CLOSER RELATIONS WITH RUSSIAN AND OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

2. THE CURRENT OFFICIAL POSTURE OF TUC IS THAT IT IS STILL WAITING TO HEAR FROM THE RUSSIANS, THAT THE ISSUE IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF ICFTU AND THAT THE TUC INTENDS TO AWAIT THE RESULTS OF WHAT AN INVESTIGATION TURNS UP BEFORE CONTEMPLATING NEXT STEPS. NEVERTHELESS, SOME KEY STAFF AND CERTAIN GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE SPREADING STORY THAT THE "ASSOCIATION OF FREE TRADE UNION OF WORKERS IN THE SOVIET UNION" IS PROBABLY A SPURIOUS POLITICAL FRONT AND THE TUC SHOULD NOT GET INVOLVED.

3. OTHER GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS TELL US HOWEVER THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT YEARS THERE WAS A CLIMATE OF DISQUIET AT A GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING ARTICULATED PARTICULARLY BY "MODERATE" COUNCIL MEMBERS WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY PRIDED THEMSELVES ON WHAT THEY THOUGHT WERE "EXCELLENT" PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH RUSSIAN OPPOSITE NUMBERS. THERE WAS "SURPRISE" THAT NO BRITISH UNION (WHICH HAD WRITTEN TO THE SOVIETS AT THE INSTIGATION OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL) HAD

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RECEIVED A RESPONSE. GENERAL SECRETARY LEN MURRAY HAVING HAD NO REPLY TO HIS MARCH LETTER TO AUCCTU'S SHIBAYEV IS EXPECTED TO WRITE AGAIN, AS IS GEOFFREY DRAIN, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE 700,000-MEMBER NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AND A POWERFUL GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBER. OTHERS ARE EXPECTED TO ADD TO THE LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN.

4. DESPITE TUC EFFORTS TO PLAY DOWN THE ISSUE, PRESS CRITICISM OF TUC IS INCREASING WITH MAY 25 GUARDIAN URGING TUC TO "ADD ITS VOICE TO THE CALL (OF ITS BRETHREN BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN) INSTEAD OF SITTING IN EMBARRASSED SILENCE AWAITING A TECHNICAL APOLOGIA FROM THE KREMLIN". LEN MURRAY, IN RESPONSE TO REPORTERS' PROBINGS, DEFINED THE ISSUE (FINANCIAL TIMES OF MAY 25) "AS DEALING HERE WITH ALLEGATIONS REGARDING TRADE UNION MEMBERS WHO SO FAR AS WE CAN UNDERSTAND ARE NOT DISSIDENTS BUT ARE COMPLAINING ABOUT THE WAY THEIR OWN UNIONS THEY ALLEGE ARE IGNORING THEIR RIGHTS AS TRADE UNIONISTS".

5. IN A PARALLEL DEVELOPMENT THE SAME DAY, LABOR PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC), WHILE UNANIMOUSLY CRITICIZING THE SOVIETS OVER THE TREATMENT OF JURI ORLOV, DEFERRED ACTING ON THE RESOLUTION OF "LEFT WING" MP ERIC HEFFER (REF B) AND DECIDED TO AWAIT TUC GENERAL COUNCIL ACTION. HOWEVER, HEFFER AND SEVERAL OTHERS ON THE NEC, INCLUDING AN IMPORTANT TRADE UNION MEMBER, STRONGLY CRITICIZED NEC DECISION NOTING LABOR PARTY HAD EXTENSIVE DOCUMENTATION ON TRADE UNION VIOLATIONS IN USSR AND NEEDED NO TUC REPORT IN ORDER TO EXPRESS THE

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PARTY'S VIEWS ON THE RIGHT OF WORKERS TO ORGANIZE FREE TRADE UNIONS. PRIMARY TRADE UNION SOURCE ON THE NEC INFORMS US THAT HEFFER, HE AND SOME OTHERS WILL FORCE

(AND HOPEFULLY WIN) A DECISION AT NEXT MONTH'S NEC
MEETING ON THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE FREE TRADE UNIONS IN
THE SOVIET UNION AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, TRADE COMPLAINTS, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON08414
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 L
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780223-0571
Format: TEL
From: LONDON USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780515/aaaaambf.tel
Line Count: 229
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3fe1b695-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BRUSSELS 10106, 78 LONDON 7581
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2552641
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ICFTU COMPLAINT AGAINST USSR
TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, UK, UR, PL, ICFTU, ILO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3fe1b695-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014